



An Investigation Into the Performance of Students Attending The University of Texas at Austin as a Result of the Coordinated Admissions Program (CAP)

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Background

The University of Texas at Austin is the flagship higher educational institution of the State of Texas. While the University is selective, the University does, however, have a heritage of accommodating all, or nearly all, of its in-state applicants. The Coordinated Admissions Program (CAP) is the University's current effort to avoid "closing the door" on any Texas resident.

Prior to the implementation of CAP, UT Austin had a provisional admissions program. The Provisional Admissions (PA) Program began in 1962 as a conditional admissions alternative for Texas resident applicants who were unsuccessful in the fall admissions process. Historically, participants in PA were required to complete twelve hours of basic college coursework during the summer with a minimum GPA of 2.25. Upon successful completion of the program, participants were eligible to enroll for the subsequent fall semester as regularly admitted freshman students. Over time, the success rate of the participants varied, but in the latter years it was approximately 50 percent.

Enrollment pressures began to peak with the summer/fall 2000 applicant pool, which had increased from 18,930 in 1999 to 21,539 (+13.7%). In the same period, the number of admits increased from 11,949 to 13,256 (+10.9%). Summer PA offers increased to more than 4,000 students and of that pool approximately 1,500 actually enrolled; 905 continued into the fall. The unexpectedly large number of enrolling freshmen brought about an evaluation of the PA and the effects of the recently-adopted Top 10% legislation.

It became increasingly evident that the profile of PA participants had changed. The automatic admission of top 10% students resulted in increased competition for the remaining spaces. This produced a body of PA students with stronger academic backgrounds. The PA Program had transformed from a conditional admission program with performance contracts, to a viable fall-admissions alternative for highly-qualified freshmen.

On November 16, 2000, the University of Texas System Board of Regents approved a revision to the Provisional Admission policy for The University of Texas at Austin. It allowed for the creation of an off-site Provisional Admission Program and simultaneously placed a moratorium on spring 2001 freshman and transfer admissions. Beginning with the fall 2001, Texas resident applicants were offered fall admission, summer freshman admission (with no performance contract conditions), or the new off-site PA (which was then called "Off-campus Provisional Admission). Eventually, the program came to be known as the Coordinated Admissions Program—or CAP.

CAP requires completion of 30 semester hours of prescribed coursework and a minimal grade point average of 3.0. This coursework must be completed at one of five participating University of Texas component institutions during the fall and spring semesters (and mini-semester during the summer at selected campuses) immediately following a student's high school graduation.¹

After successfully completing the program requirements, participants are guaranteed unconditional acceptance into the College of Liberal Arts or Natural Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin. Although the admissions guarantee only applies to those two colleges, participants are afforded an opportunity to compete for admission into UT's other major programs.

"CAP01" Students

The first group of students to be offered Coordinated Admissions was from the applicant pool of the summer/fall 2001 cycle. In that year there were 2,084 offers; 599 students returned their CAP contracts and 476 actually enrolled in participating UT System schools. At the mid-point of their component matriculation, 364 indicated that they intended to enroll at UT Austin. In the fall of 2002, 182 actually enrolled. These students (n=182) are hereafter referred to as "CAP01." They are all graduates of Texas High Schools. Table 1 provides a demographic breakdown of that subset.

**Table 1
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Breakdown of CAP01 Students
Fall 2002**

Ethnicity	Gender				Grand Total	
	FEMALE		MALE			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AMERICAN INDIAN	1	1			1	1
ASIAN AMERICAN	18	22	24	24	42	23
AFRICAN AMERICAN	4	5	5	5	9	5
HISPANIC	17	21	20	20	37	20
WHITE	41	51	51	50	92	51
UNKNOWN			1	1	1	1
TOTAL	81	100	101	100	182	100

¹ The participating UT System component schools are UT Arlington, UT San Antonio, UT Pan American, UT Permian Basin, and UT El Paso.

“CAP01” Performance Compared to Classmates Admitted as Entering Freshmen and Summer Freshmen – Summer/Fall 2001

Since CAP was designed to accommodate as many Texas residents as possible, this portion of this study is limited to graduates of Texas High Schools. Specifically, four subsets of entering 2001 freshmen are analyzed:

1. **Top 10% Automatic Admits** are those students who were automatically admitted as a result of the Texas Automatic Admissions Law (HB 588). As such, these Texas high school graduates did not compete with those students who were to become CAP01. They are included for illustrative purposes only.
2. **Non-Top 10% Admits** are those Texas high school graduates who competed for remaining slots after the top 10% students were admitted. Their credentials were such that they were admitted to the semester of their choice. (This group does not include the Summer Freshmen described below.)
3. **Summer Freshmen Admits** are those Texas high school graduates who were admitted, but on the condition that they begin coursework during the summer semester. This group most closely resembles the CAP01 group and is the best group for comparison.
4. **CAP01** students are as described above.

Tables 2 through 4 provide demographic information about the groups enumerated above.

Table 2
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Breakdown of Top 10% Students Who Entered in Fall of 2001 Texas High School Graduates

Ethnicity	Gender				Grand Total	
	FEMALE		MALE			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AMERICAN INDIAN	6	<1%	4	<1%	10	<1%
ASIAN AMERICAN	392	20%	325	22%	717	21%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	97	5%	35	2%	132	4%
INTERNATIONAL	7	<1%	11	1%	18	1%
HISPANIC	319	17%	256	17%	575	17%
WHITE	1094	57%	837	57%	1931	57%
UNKNOWN	11	1%	4	<1%	15	<1%
Grand Total	1926	100%	1472	100%	3398	100%

Table 3
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Breakdown of Non-Top 10% Students who Entered in Fall of 2001 (Excluding Summer Freshmen)

Ethnicity	Gender				Grand Total	
	FEMALE		MALE			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AMERICAN INDIAN	6	1%	8	1%	14	1%
ASIAN AMERICAN	209	18%	247	20%	456	19%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	36	3%	40	3%	76	3%
INTERNATIONAL	5	0%	7	1%	12	1%
HISPANIC	145	13%	134	11%	279	12%
WHITE	735	64%	803	64%	1538	64%
UNKNOWN	4	0%	6	0%	10	0%
Grand Total	1140	100%	1245	100%	2385	100%

Table 4
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Breakdown of 2001 Summer Freshmen

Ethnicity	Gender				Grand Total	
	FEMALE		MALE			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AMERICAN INDIAN	3	1%	3	1%	6	1%
ASIAN AMERICAN	65	16%	94	19%	159	18%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	14	3%	14	3%	28	3%
HISPANIC	64	15%	87	18%	151	17%
WHITE	272	65%	287	59%	559	62%
UNKNOWN	1	0%	2	0%	3	0%
Grand Total	419	100%	487	100%	906	100%

Table 5 below is a breakdown of the study groups by ACT/SAT Score intervals.² It is not surprising that the group with the highest mean score is the Non-Top 10% group. These students competed for slots, and test scores played a large role in their admission. Among the groups that compete (Non-Top 10%, Summer Freshmen, and CAP01) the scores are consistent with the order in which the students were admitted. That is, those not making it as Non-Top 10% students were next considered as Summer Freshmen. Consequently, those who were considered as Summer Freshmen but were not admitted were offered CAP.

Table 5
Breakdown of ACT/SAT Intervals
Fall 2001

	Top 10%		Non-Top 10% (Excl Summer Frosh.)		Summer Freshmen		CAP01	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<900	76	2%	23	1%	1	0%	9	5%
900-990	213	6%	83	3%	36	4%	39	21%
1000-1090	406	12%	249	10%	183	20%	52	29%
1100-1190	749	22%	530	22%	374	41%	56	31%
1200-1290	800	24%	764	32%	265	29%	20	11%
1300-1390	651	19%	488	20%	41	5%	6	3%
1400-1490	392	12%	202	8%	5	1%		0%
1500-1600	111	3%	45	2%	1	0%		0%
Not Reported		0%	1	0%		0%		0%
Total	3398	100%	2385	100%	906	100%	182	100%
Mean	1222		1230		1155		1074	

² The University of Texas at Austin accepts either the ACT Assessment or the SAT 1: Reasoning Test. For purposes of this study, ACT values were concorded to the SAT scale. The largest score value was used for each individual. For more information on how ACT were concorded to the SAT scale, see <http://www.utexas.edu/student/research/reports/admissions/taskforce.htm>

Table 6 illustrates performance by the study groups during the freshman year. For the groups matriculating at UT Austin during the 2001-2002 academic year (Top 10%, Non-Top 10%, and Summer Freshmen) the mean grade point averages (MGPA) are for "in resident" or actual coursework taken, i.e., credit-by-exam was eliminated. The MGPA for the CAP01 students, who matriculated at the component campuses, is significantly higher than the other groups, but this was predictable, since CAP students had to meet a minimal GPA requirement (≥ 3.00) to enroll at UT Austin for their sophomore year.

Table 6 also shows that there is a relationship between ACT/SAT scores and performance for the Top 10% group; it is less obvious with the Non-Top 10% group, and almost non-existent for the Summer Freshmen. The ACT/SAT interval breakdown for CAP01 is provided below, but it is meaningless in this context since CAP01 students came to UT Austin from five different campuses

Table 6
Group Performance During Freshman Year (Academic Year 2001-2002)
Entering 2001

Note: Some n-counts differ from Table 5 because students with no hours attempted were eliminated.

	Top 10%		Non-Top 10% (Excl Summer Freshmen)		Summer Freshmen		CAP01	
	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (Transfer)
<900	76	2.14	22	2.02	1	3.04	9	3.21
900-990	213	2.60	82	2.50	36	2.51	39	3.39
1000-1090	402	2.77	246	2.51	177	2.32	52	3.36
1100-1190	741	3.01	523	2.68	365	2.46	56	3.38
1200-1290	795	3.18	758	2.81	258	2.41	20	3.41
1300-1390	650	3.40	481	2.93	40	2.23	6	3.42
1400-1490	391	3.55	199	3.02	5	1.61		
1500-1600	111	3.66	45	2.94	1	4.00		
Total	3379	3.13	2357	2.78	883	2.41	182	3.37

Table 7 below illustrates performance by all groups during academic year 2002-03. This would be the first semester in which all of the groups are attending classes on the same campus. For that reason it is the optimal time period to consider different admissions routes, differential freshman year experiences and whether each prepares students for success while on the Austin campus. In Table 7 the MGPA is the in-resident mean grade point average earned during 2002-03. The Top 10% group earned the highest mean GPA (3.10) followed by the Non-Top 10% group (2.83). Interestingly, there is no difference in performance between the Summer Freshmen and the CAP01 groups (2.64).

Table 7
Sophomore Year Group Performance
Entering 2001 Performance During Academic Year 2002-03 at UT Austin

Note: Some n-counts differ from Table 5 because students with no hours attempted were eliminated.

	Top 10%		Non-Top 10% (Excl Summer Freshmen)		Summer Freshmen		CAP01	
	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (In Res)	N	MGPA (In Res)
<900	60	2.32	19	2.29	1	2.75	9	2.68
900-990	189	2.69	71	2.51	33	2.68	39	2.74
1000-1090	369	2.77	220	2.67	156	2.56	52	2.55
1100-1190	685	3.02	476	2.82	326	2.65	55	2.61
1200-1290	743	3.14	699	2.85	228	2.66	20	2.75
1300-1390	622	3.31	454	2.92	34	2.59	6	2.63
1400-1490	378	3.35	190	2.94	4	2.75		
1500-1600	108	3.52	44	2.74	1	4.00		
Not Reported			1	1.44				
Total	3154	3.10	2174	2.83	783	2.64	181	2.64

Table 8 below is the result of a search for the classes most-often taken by CAP01 students upon their entrance to UT Austin. The top five classes were English 316K (E316K), Chemistry 301(CH301), Economics 304K (ECO304K), Government 312L (GOV312L), and Math 408C (M408C). MGPA represents the average grade earned by the study groups.

English 316K, entitled *Masterworks of Literature*, is an introduction to masterpieces of the literary tradition taught in three topics (World, British or American Literature). Students may choose either topic to complete their sophomore literature degree requirement. The prerequisite for this course is the completion of at least twenty-seven semester hours of coursework, including “freshman English” and an appropriate score on the reading section of the TASP test.

Economics 304K, entitled *Introduction to Microeconomics*, includes an analysis of the economic behavior of individual consumers, firms, and workers, with special attention given to the role of markets. This is one of two introductory courses in Economics. Microeconomics and

Macroeconomics are popular social sciences and are specifically required for degree completion in the Economics and Business Administration degree programs.

Government 312L, entitled *Issues and Policies in American Government*, is a topics course in American Government covering political institutions and may include the United States and Texas Constitutions. Completion of this course, along with Government 310L satisfies the legislative requirement for government in all degree programs. It can only be taken once for credit. The prerequisite for this course is twenty-four semester hours of college coursework, including Government 310L, and an appropriate score on the reading section of TASP.

Chemistry 301, entitled *Principles of Chemistry I*, is an introductory course that satisfies the Natural Sciences requirement toward most degree programs, but can not be used toward the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degree. The prerequisite for this course is credit or registration for pre-calculus, or an appropriate score on the Math placement exam.

Math 408C, entitled *Differential and Integral Calculus*, is the first of two introductory Calculus courses that covers a variety of topics relating to mathematical applications and functions. All students whose degree programs require higher levels of mathematics must successfully complete this course sequence. The prerequisites for this course are either successful completion of pre-calculus, or four years of high school mathematics and an appropriate score on the Math placement exam.

Table 8
Sophomore Year Group Performance
Selected Courses
Entering 2001 Performance During Academic Year 2002-03

	Top 10%		Non-Top 10% (Excl Summer Freshmen)		Summer Freshmen		CAP01	
	N	MGPA	N	MGPA	N	MGPA	N	MGPA
E316K	596	3.15	488	2.93	249	2.83	90	2.83
CH301	135	2.77	110	2.56	38	2.32	32	2.09
ECO304K	168	2.61	179	2.43	67	2.36	33	2.09
GOV312L	494	3.05	404	2.94	188	2.79	35	2.86
M408C	60	2.17	76	2.04	31	2.13	26	2.15

Comparing CAP01 to Transfer Students

Since applicants who accept the conditions of the Coordinated Admissions Program agree to do at least 30 hours of coursework on another campus, it is appropriate to compare CAP01 performance with that of transfer students who entered at the same time with a similar amount of coursework completed on another campus. "Transfer Students" as it is used in the tables below are limited to those students who transferred to UT from another higher educational institution with 24-36 transferable credit hours. This subset of transfers most resembles the CAP01 group. (Some students transfer to UT Austin with as much as 60+ or even 100+ hours. For obvious reasons, they were excluded.)

Table 9 is a racial/ethnic breakdown of transfer students.

Table 9
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Breakdown of Transfer Students
(With 24-36 Transferable Credit Hours)
Fall 2002

Ethnicity	Gender				Grand Total	
	FEMALE		MALE			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AMERICAN INDIAN	2	1%	2	1%	4	1%
ASIAN AMERICAN	30	12%	26	11%	56	11%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	7	3%	6	3%	13	3%
INTERNATIONAL	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
HISPANIC	34	13%	30	13%	64	13%
WHITE	179	70%	171	72%	350	71%
UNKNOWN	4	2%	3	1%	7	1%
TOTAL	257	100%	239	100%	496	100%

Table 10 below provides mean grade point averages of the transfers and the CAP01 groups during the freshman year (which was not spent on the Austin campus). Since the transfers were successfully admitted to UT Austin as a result of their GPA, it is not surprising that the mean for that group would be very high (mean=3.56).

Table 10
Group Performance During Off-Campus Matriculation
Entering 2001

	N	MGPA (Transfer)
TRANSFER	496	3.56
CAP01	182	3.37

Table 11 compares the group performance of transfers and CAP01 students. As measured by mean GPA during a time when all of the students were on the UT Austin campus (Academic Year 2002-03), transfer students outperformed CAP01 students (mean=2.89 compared to 2.64).

Table 11
Sophomore Year Group Performance
Entering 2001 Performance During Academic Year 2002-03

	N	MGPA (In Res)
TRANSFER STUDENT GPA	489	2.89
CAP01 GPA	181	2.64

Table 12 compares performance in selected courses (as described above) between transfers and CAP01 students. Performance gaps are largest in Chemistry and Economics.

Table 12
Sophomore Year Group Performance
Selected Courses
Entering 2001 Performance During Academic Year 2002-03

	TRANSFERS		CAP01	
	N	MGPA	N	MGPA
E316K	161	2.93	90	2.83
CH301	67	2.51	32	2.09
ECO304K	68	2.51	33	2.09
GOV312L	99	2.87	35	2.86
M408C	37	2.38	26	2.15